

REMARKS

The Examiner will note the required change to meet the informality in claim 1 has been accomplished. Claim 4 is canceled, which will obviate the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

The Examiner has continued the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hatanaka et al. in view of Harandi.

In response to applicants' argument that the "consisting essentially of a non-reducible metal oxide" excludes the active metal catalysts of applied prior art. The Examiner expressed the view that this argument is not persuasive because the claim language limits the scope of the claims to the specified materials and those that do not materially affect the characteristics of the material. Applicants have not shown that the supported metals of the prior art catalysts affect the characteristics of the material in relation to the claimed process.

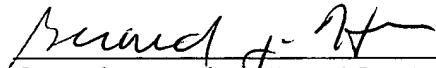
In response, attached is an affidavit by Robert C. Welch, who is a co-inventor of the claimed invention. The affidavit demonstrates that the applicants' catalysts and conditions do provide unexpected results over the supported metals of the prior art catalysts under the conditions set forth in applicants' amended claim 1.

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It is again urged that applicants have made a patentable advance in the art. Favorable action and early allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact applicants' attorney should the Examiner wish to discuss this application further.

Respectfully submitted:

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